

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 SAB-01

SCCT-01 /074 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8084

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02023

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EG, UK, XF

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT SADAT SUPPORTS

KISSINGER STEP-BY-STEP FORMULA

1. THE TIMES FEBRUARY 10 CARRIED FRONT PAGE REPORT OF LONG INTERVIEW ON FEBRUARY 9 AT BARRAGE GOVERNMENT REST HOUSE GIVEN BY EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT TO A.M. RENDEL, LONG-TIME (AND RELIABLE) CORRESPONDENT WHO IS VISITING MIDDLE EAST AT MOMENT. SADAT DECLARED HE WAS PREPARED TO LET US SECRETARY OF STATE SEE IF STEP-BY-STEP AGREEMENT POSSIBLE, PRIOR TO APRIL EXPIRATION OF UNEF. SADAT SPOKE OF INABILITY TO ACCEPT WITHDRAWALS ON SINAI FRONT UNLESS SIMILAR PROGRESS IS ALSO MADE ON GOLAN HEIGHTS AND JORDAN WEST BANK. DETERMINED TO REMAIN NONALIGNED BETWEEN US AND SOVIETS, EGYPT MUST RECONCILE "PRESENT UNCLASSIFIED

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NEED OF DR. KISSINGER TO WIN A DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS" AND

"DESIRE OF SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN CONTRIBUTION TO ANY SETTLEMENT." SADAT SAID RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS HAD GONE THROUGH DIFFICULT PERIOD BUT MUCH IMPROVED BY GROMYKO VISIT TO CAIRO AND DATE OF BREZHNEV PROPOSED VISIT TO EGYPT WOULD BE DISCUSSED WHEN KISSINGER AND GROMYKO MEET IN GENEVA. SADAT SAID HE SHOULD NOT BE ASKED TO GIVE DECLARATION OF NONBELLIGERENCY AT THIS TIME, BUT ONLY AS PART OF FINAL SETTLEMENT. HE SAID PLO MUST BE ACCEPTED AS TAKING PART IN WEST BANK NEGOTIATION. PLO POLICY HAD IN FACT CHANGED SINCE THEY NOW SUPPORTED NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

2. FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE AS FOLLOWS: "ON THE EVE OF DR. KISSINGER'S NEW ROUND OF TALKS, PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT OF EGYPT SPOKE TO ME TODAY OF THE DELICATE STAGE NOW REACHED IN NEGOTIATIONS TO FIND A WAY FORWARD IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

"THE INTERVIEW WHICH WAS HELD AT THE GOVERNMENT REST HOUSE, KNOWN AS THE BARRAGE, SOME 20 MILES UP THE NILE FROM CAIRO, WAS CONDUCTED BY THE PRESIDENT IN FLUENT, ALMOST FAULTLESS ENGLISH FOR NEARLY AN HOUR.

"HE BEGAN BY STATING THAT AT THE MEETING IN VLADIVOSTOK BETWEEN PRESIDENT FORD AND MR. BREZHNEV LAST YEAR, THE AMERICANS HAD SUPPORTED A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO THE ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM, WHILE THE RUSSIANS PROPOSED A RETURN TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

HE HIMSELF, HE DECLARED, WAS PREPARED TO LET THE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE HAVE HIS CHANCE TO SEE IF A STEP-BY-STEP AGREEMENT WAS POSSIBLE, BUT TIME WAS RUNNING SHORT.

"IF THERE WAS NO REAL PROGRESS BEFORE APRIL WHEN THE UNITED NATIONS MANDATE ON THE SINAI FRONT EXPIRES, THEN HE DID NOT LIKE TO CONTEMPLATE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF EGYPT WAS ASKED TO AGREE TO PROLONG THE MANDATE.

"THE FACT IS THAT EGYPT IS IN A PARTICULARLY COMPLEX NEGOTIATING SITUATION, SINCE IT CANNOT ACCEPT WITHDRAWALS ON THE SINAI FRONT, WHICH ISRAEL SEEMS READY TO MAKE, UNLESS SIMILAR PROGRESS IS ALSO MADE ON THE OTHER TWO FRONTS--THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THE JORDAN WEST BANK. WITHOUT THIS THE PRINCIPLE OF ARAB UNITY IS UNDERMINED, TO WHICH PRESIDENT SADAT CANNOT AGREE.

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"MOREOVER, IN ITS DETERMINATION TO REMAIN NON-ALIGNED BETWEEN THE TWO SUPERPOWERS, EGYPT MUST RECONCILE THE PRESENT NEED OF DR. KISSINGER TO WIN A DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS AND THE DESIRE OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN CONTRIBUTION TO ANY SETTLEMENT.

"PRESIDENT SADAT DECLARED THAT EGYPT'S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA, WHICH HAD GONE THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD, HAD NOW BEEN MUCH IMPROVED BY THE VISIT TO CAIRO LAST

WEEK OF MR. GROMYKO, THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER. BUT THE DATE OF MR. BREZHNEV'S PROPOSED VISIT TO EGYPT WAS SOMETHING, PRESIDENT SADAT SAID, WHICH WOULD NOW BE DISCUSSED BETWEEN DR. KISSINGER AND MR. GROMYKO WHEN THEY MEET IN GENEVA AFTER DR. KISSINGER'S MIDDLE EAST TOUR.

"IF DR. KISSINGER WAS ABLE TO BRING FROM ISRAEL AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE THAT WITHDRAWALS ON THE GOLAN AND WEST BANK FRONTS WERE POSSIBLE TOGETHER WITH A DATE FOR

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THE START OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS, THEN EGYPT WOULD BE PREPARED TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS ON WITHDRAWALS ON THE SINAI FRONT. BUT THERE MUST BE REAL PROGRESS BEFORE THE

UNITED NATIONS' APRIL DEADLINE.

"ASKED IF EGYPT WOULD GIVE A DECLARATION OF NON-BELLIGERENCY FOR A PERIOD PENDING NEGOTIATIONS, PRESIDENT SADAT SAID EGYPT SHOULD NOT BE ASKED THIS, HAVING GIVEN AMPLE PROOF OF HER GOOD WILL BY MASSIVE OPERATIONS TO OPEN THE SUEZ CANAL AND BY REBUILDING THE CANAL TOWNS DESTROYED IN THE WAR, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE STILL WITHIN RANGE OF ISRAEL ARTILLERY.

"A DECLARATION OF NONBELLIGERENCY WOULD BE GIVEN EVENTUALLY AS PART OF THE FINAL SETTLEMENT.

"PRESIDENT SADAT ALSO SAID THAT THE PALESTINE
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LIBERATION ORGANIZATION MUST BE ACCEPTED AS TAKING PART IN THE WEST BANK NEGOTIATION. THEIR POLICY HAD IN FACT CHANGED SINCE THEY NOW SUPPORTED A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

"WHEN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SINAI FRONTIER BEGAN, EGYPT'S TERMS WOULD BE WITHDRAWAL BY ISRAEL FROM THE ABU RUDEIS OIL FIELD OVER WHICH EGYPT MUST HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL, AND WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STRATEGIC MITLA AND GIDI

PASSES. UNITED NATIONS SUPERVISION OF A ZONE IN THE AREA OF THE PASSES WAS NEGOTIABLE.

"PRESIDENT SADAT SAID THAT IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS THE MOOD IN EGYPT WAS OPTIMISTIC AS IS INDEED CLEAR TO ANY VISITOR. HE HIMSELF, HE SAID, WAS OPTIMISTIC BUT HE WISHED TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE POSSIBILITIES OF A SUDDEN EXPLOSION, EITHER FROM SOME DELIBERATE ATTACK BY ISRAEL OR THROUGH PURE MISCHANCE, WERE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS."

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